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<https://doi.org/10.1123/tsp.2015-0077>

Transformational leadership in elite sport: A qualitative analysis of effective leadership behaviors in cricket.

**Running Head: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN CRICKET**

Transformational leadership in elite sport: A qualitative analysis of effective leadership behaviors in cricket.

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Date Submitted: July 18<sup>th</sup> 2015

Date re-submitted: February 18<sup>th</sup> 2016

### Abstract

We examined transformational leadership behaviors are exhibited in an elite sport environment. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 professional county cricket players to explore perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors of their captain and head-coach. Behaviors were firstly deductively categorised based on the Differentiated Transformational Leadership Inventory, with the most frequently cited being high performance expectations and individual consideration from the coach, and appropriate role-modelling of the captain. Further inductive analyses revealed a range of other factors which may influence players' perceptions of transformational leadership. From these findings, suggestions are offered for those working in an applied context with sporting leaders.

1           Bass (1985) describes transformational leadership as a phenomenon in which leaders can  
2   stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. As such, this theory provides a  
3   framework of behaviors that, if exhibited by leaders, can predict positive follower outcomes. Since  
4   its inception (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), much evidence has been produced to highlight the  
5   positive impacts of transformational leadership across a variety of domains, such as business (e.g.,  
6   Avolio, Zhu, Koh, Bhatia, 2004), and military (e.g., Hardy et al., 2010) settings. In the  
7   organizational context, research has revealed transformational leadership enables followers to  
8   exceed expectations, and results in greater follower satisfaction and commitment to the  
9   organization (Bono & Judge, 2004). Given the positive contribution transformational leadership  
10   has provided to our understanding of leadership in the organizational context, more recently,  
11   researchers have utilised the theory to examine leadership in sport. This research has mostly  
12   mirrored the positive findings demonstrated in the organizational setting. For example, Rowold  
13   (2006) found transformational behaviors of martial arts' coaches positively predicted individual  
14   follower outcomes such as satisfaction and extra effort. In a team sport setting, Callow, Smith,  
15   Hardy, Arthur, and Hardy (2009) found transformational leader behaviors of captains to have a  
16   positive impact on task and social cohesion.

17           The principle method of investigating the impact of transformational leadership in sport  
18   has involved administering pencil and paper measures to players to examine the relationships  
19   between transformational behaviors and follower outcomes. However, from an applied  
20   perspective, it would also be worthwhile to explore how effective leaders display these specific  
21   transformational behaviors. In support of this, Stenling and Tafvelin (2014) propose that an  
22   important issue is to identify the actual behaviors leaders engage in when they exhibit  
23   transformational leadership in order to develop interventions. To this end, the application of  
24   qualitative methodologies would allow for richer and more elaborate representation of the  
25   theoretical construct (Sparkes & Smith, 2013), and, in the case of the current research, provide

more information with regards to what transformational leader behaviors actually *look like* in practice.

In the organizational psychology literature, a variety of qualitative methods have been used to examine effective leadership practice, such as interviews, observation, and analysis of written documents or accounts (Bryman, 2004). In the sporting context, researchers have used interviews and found that effective leaders possess a range of personal attributes (e.g., desire for personal growth) and exceptional organizational skills (Bloom & Salmela, 2000), have aspirations to facilitate their players' individual growth both in and out (e.g., nurturing life skills) of the sporting context (Vallée & Bloom, 2005), and serve as role models for their followers by demonstrating exemplary behavior (Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughhead, 2006). However, a common limitation of these studies is the sole reliance on leaders as the source of information, which is problematic given that leadership is, at the least, a two-way interaction between a leader (e.g., a coach) and a follower, and often attributed (i.e., players' perceptions of the leader and their behavior are just as, if not more important than the behavior that the leaders demonstrate). Consequently, Becker (2009) suggested that, as players are the recipients of coaches' displays of leadership, gaining an understanding of athlete experiences would offer a more complete picture of the coaching process. Indeed, when discussing the results of a study exploring how expert coaches develop successful university sport programs, Vallée and Bloom (2005) suggest that further qualitative research is needed to examine followers' perceptions of working with transformational leaders. Following interviews with five coaches, Vallée and Bloom concluded that the four characteristics that emerged in their study were similar to the four original characteristics of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). For example, Vallée and Bloom highlighted how coaches promoting individual growth in their players and focussing on personal athlete improvement was conceptually similar to the transformational behavior of individualised consideration, which describes the leader as having awareness of their followers' needs.

In the only study to use qualitative methods to explicitly explore transformational leadership to date, Newland, Newton, Podlog, Legg, and Tanner (2015) highlighted the need for qualitative research to explore transformational leadership from the perspective of the athlete, as recognising the players' perspectives is necessary to "deepen our understanding of what constitutes transformational leadership in sport" (p.4). To address this gap in the literature, Newland and her colleagues conducted interviews with eleven female college players to examine positive experiences the players recollected from working with current or former coaches. Thematic analyses revealed four key ways that coaches positively impacted their players, which were by caring, motivating, teaching life lessons, and trusting. In discussing their findings, Newland et al. considered how these themes were similar and different to the behaviors in existing frameworks of transformational leadership (e.g., Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). One finding particularly highlighted by the authors was the importance of the coach showing a caring approach, with similarities to individual consideration observed, and the suggestion made that such leadership behavior was at the heart of elevating typical leadership behaviors to transformational ones.

The majority of research examining transformational leadership in organizational psychology has utilised Bass' (1985) original conceptualization, which outlines four key behaviors that positively impact on follower outcomes. These behaviors are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Quantitative research examining transformational leadership has in the main utilised measures based around Bass' original conceptualization, such as the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ-5X; Bass & Avolio, 1997), however, the MLQ-5X has only been sparsely used within sport. This may be because it was originally designed for an organizational context and thus may have limited utility within sport. Furthermore, research utilising the MLQ-5X has been criticised for failing to

produce support for the original conceptualization proposed by Bass (1985). Indeed, research (e.g., Zacharatos, Barling, & Kelloway, 2000) has often found the four supposedly distinct behaviors to be so intercorrelated (often with correlations greater than 0.70) that the model is collapsed down into one over-arching measure of transformational leadership (for a comprehensive review see van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Therefore, given the limitations of the original four-dimension model of transformational leadership, the present study will utilise the Differentiated Transformational Leadership Inventory (DTLI; Callow et al., 2009) that was designed specifically for a sport context as a framework to explore transformational leadership in the current research. This measure was validated using a sporting sample and has been used in a number of studies that have examined transformational leadership in a sporting domain (e.g., Arthur, Woodman, Ong, Hardy, & Ntoumanis, 2011; Smith, Arthur, Hardy, Callow, & Williams, 2013; Cronin, Arthur, Hardy, & Callow, 2015). The DTLI has consistently demonstrated good psychometric properties and, as it is a more differentiated model, allows for a more detailed examination of specific leadership behaviors. Consequently, information concerning these behaviors will allow us to provide more specific guidance for applied practitioners indicating how best to intervene when working with sporting leaders.

The present study is the first study to specifically examine transformational leadership within an elite professional context. With regards to the relevance of transformational leadership within elite sport there is some evidence emerging from the research literature that transformational leadership is highly relevant within this context. For example, in a recent qualitative study that examined the climate of a world championship team (Allblacks rugby) transformational leadership emerged as a significant component of the leadership within this team (Hodge, Henry & Smith, 2014). Consequently, the current the research will build on this to specifically examine transformational leadership of coaches and captains within the professional sport of cricket. Cricket was chosen because matches can last for four days, with approximately

six hours of playing time a day. At an elite level, teams are together for long periods of time<sup>1</sup>, the leaders have much opportunity to demonstrate transformational behaviors, and thus, provide rich data in the present study. Furthermore, while the coach in cricket is a more managerial leader, the cricket captain has an enhanced leadership role compared to other sports as they make the majority of on-pitch decisions, and is a key part of the team's leadership structure off the pitch (Cotterill, 2014). Thus, in view of the context in which cricket captains and coaches operate at an elite level, with each having numerous leadership responsibilities, this sample was deemed appropriate to examine examples of transformational leadership.

In summary, given that transformational leader behaviors have been seen to have a positive impact on player outcomes in sport, and little qualitative research in the sport psychology literature has explicitly explored transformational leadership, the aim of the present study was to use transformational leadership as a lens through which to examine leadership behaviors. Specifically, the aims of this study were to extend our knowledge of transformational leadership in four main ways. First, an elite sample was used, thus adding to a limited amount of research that has investigated transformational leadership in sport at a higher level (Arthur & Tomsett, 2015). Second, much of the qualitative leadership research has been from the perspective of the leader, and the present study investigated perceptions of effective leadership from the follower's perspective. Third, while numerous studies have investigated the impact of transformational leadership behaviors in a sporting context using quantitative methods, the present study will add to a very limited amount of research that has used qualitative methods to investigate and illustrate effective transformational leader behaviors. Such methods will inform leaders of how they might display effective transformational behaviors and also to inform practitioners who provide support

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<sup>1</sup> To illustrate this point, in the upcoming county season players could play between 86-92 days of competitive cricket in 185 days (based upon 16 4-day championship games, 14 T20 games, and 8 50-over games with the season running from April 10<sup>th</sup> to September 23<sup>rd</sup>). These games are also interspersed with training and travelling days needed for the various formats.



to leaders of sports teams. Fourth, the leadership of both coaches and captains was examined, thereby extending the literature by examining multiple leadership roles in elite sport teams.

## Method

### Design

In order to extend our understanding of leadership practice in elite sport, this study used qualitative methods that involved an explorative approach to inquiry (Fletcher & Arnold, 2011). This approach uses interviews which prompt participants to provide in-depth information that captures the subjective meaning in contextual situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Furthermore, such a method considers the different interpretations of participants, to generate rich data from various perspectives. Interviews were therefore selected to explore the experiences of players who have experienced leadership in an elite sport environment.

### Participants and recruitment

A purposeful sampling method was used, with specific sampling criteria established a priori, to recruit participants who could provide the most valuable responses to address the research aims. The first criterion was to recruit professional players, who worked regularly on a daily basis with their respective coaches and captains, which would enable them to provide detailed information concerning the leadership behaviors of their captains and coaches. Second, players were only recruited if they played regularly for the county first team. Third, players were recruited from county sides whose leaders were perceived highly in terms of their transformational behavior. Leaders (and subsequently followers) were identified using data from a previous study (Young, 2010), which involved a sample of 155 male cricket players ( $M_{age} = 27.2$  years,  $SD = 4.7$ ), who were professionally contracted to 11 different First Class Counties in England and Wales. The players completed the DTLI (Callow et al., 2009) to assess the transformational leadership behaviors of both their head coach and captain. The DTLI a 27-item inventory that includes six different transformational leader behaviors (high performance expectations,

inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, appropriate role modelling, individual consideration, and fostering acceptance of group goals and teamwork). The 27 items were summed to produce an overall score for the head coach and captain from each county side, and the average scores were calculated and are shown in Table 1. From these results, the scores for both the head coaches and captains were ranked, and from this, three counties were identified where the coach and captain were rated highly in terms of transformational leader behaviors.

Head coaches of the identified counties were known to the second author professionally, and the second author made initial contact with these head coaches to ask for permission to conduct the study. More specifically, the second author communicated to each of the selected head coaches the purpose of the study, and informed them that players in their squads would be asked to speak about leadership behaviors of both the head coach themselves and the captain. Each of the three head coaches contacted gave verbal consent to participate in the study, and agreed to arrange contact with players from their squads (who had completed the DTLI) who would be available to be interviewed. In total, nine professional county cricket players ( $M_{age} 26.67$ ,  $SD = 2.72$  years) participated in the study, with three participants interviewed from each side. They had been playing professional cricket for between three and nine years ( $M = 6.89$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ) and had played for their current county side for between one and 12 years ( $M = 5.56$ ,  $SD = 2.63$ ). In addition, the participants had played under their current coaches between one and nine years ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 2.45$ ) and had played for their current captain for between one and three years ( $M = 1.67$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ). All participants reported themselves to be of white-European ethnicity.

Insert Table 1. about here

## Procedure

Following institutional ethical approval, initial contact was made with the head coaches of the three selected counties to explain the aims of the study and to request their permission to interview players from their squads. Following this, the first author contacted each head coach to

173 arrange an appropriate time to travel to the training facilities and conduct interviews with available  
174 players from their respective sides. The interviews were conducted in December and January  
175 which is part of the cricket off-season, and a period where players would be preparing for the new  
176 county season starting in March. In all instances, the first author arranged with the head coach to  
177 travel to the training facilities of each county, and a sample of players were interviewed depending  
178 on availability on that day. The personal contacts of the second author helped gain access to the  
179 participants, and helped gain rapport and trust with the coaches who in turn communicated with  
180 players who were to be interviewed. The interviewer had coaching and playing experience in the  
181 sport, and was familiar with the terms used by the participants, and this understanding of the sport  
182 resulted in enhanced atmosphere of trust between interviewer and participant (Sève, Poizat, Saury,  
183 & Durand, 2006). Each player participated in one semi-structured interview, which was conducted  
184 in an office at the training facilities of the relevant club. The interviews ranged in duration from 46  
185 to 94 minutes ( $M_{\text{minutes}} = 68.33$ ) and were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The audio data  
186 files were transcribed verbatim, which produced 208 pages of single-spaced text.

### 187 **Interview guide**

188 An interview guide with five sections was created for this study, which built on the  
189 approach used by Fletcher and Arnold (2011). This five-step approach created a consistent  
190 approach to the interviews, while allowing some flexibility to explore specific issues (Patton,  
191 2002). The first section provided participants with information about the study, its purpose, and  
192 the participants' right to withdraw at any time. At this stage, participants were assured that  
193 personally identifiable information about themselves, their captains, or their coaches would not be  
194 disclosed at any stage of the research process. The second section provided an opportunity to  
195 confirm participant understanding, and participants were invited to voluntarily proceed with the  
196 interview. The third section consisted of introductory questions designed to develop rapport with  
197 the participants (e.g., "tell me about your time playing for your current side"). The fourth section

involved the preliminary exploration of the leadership behaviors exhibited by the participants' head coaches and captains. For the purpose of the present study, participants were initially asked to respond to the questions "Tell me about the leadership of your captain/coach," with this first question worded in such a way to allow for a broad range of descriptive responses from the participants (Pollio, Henley & Thompson, 1997). The phrase transformational leadership was not explicitly used in the interviews, as the aim of the study was to understand participants' perceptions of effective leadership, without imposing pre-existing definitions (Newland et al., 2015). Probe questions were used to allow participants to expand on relevant issues raised by participants in order to elicit deeper information from the participants concerning the leadership examples participants described. The final section involved a number of further prompts concerning various aspects of the season (i.e., before the season starting, situations in training) to encourage participants to recall more specific examples of leadership behaviors exhibited by their coach or captain.

Prior to commencement of the main study, a pilot interview was conducted with a club cricketer (male, aged 22). The interview was transcribed verbatim and analysed alongside an experienced qualitative researcher to provide an opportunity for the author to refine his interviewing skills on this particular topic, as well as to check the suitability of the interview guide. One result of this discussion was the use of more effective prompts at certain stages in order to allow participants being interviewed greater opportunity to offer fuller responses.

### **Data Analysis**

The object of the analysis was to build an organised system of categories to outline and describe the effective leadership behaviors exhibited by the highly rated head coaches and captains (Vallée & Bloom, 2005). The data was analysed using both deductive and inductive techniques. Initially, as the leaders (coaches and captains) were rated as displaying high levels of transformational leadership, the analysis was deductive, in that information emerging from the

interviews concerning effective leadership was coded into categories based on an existing transformational leadership framework. Following this inductive analysis was conducted to examine the data that did not fit within the transformational leadership framework.

The first stage of the analysis involved the interviewer immersing himself in the transcripts and extracting raw-data quotes pertaining to aspects of transformational leadership. During a second reading, each example of leadership was highlighted as a meaning unit. A meaning unit is a segment of text comprised of words, phrases or an entire paragraph that express the same idea and is related to the same topic (Tesch, 1990). Deductive analyses were first used to categorise the data, with the DTLI (Callow et al., 2009) used as a framework in this analysis. The first and second author independently coded the raw-data quotes into one of these six transformational categories, and then compared the codings. Where discrepancies between the researchers emerged, both researchers revisited the definitions of the transformational behaviors, and further discussion took place until consensus was reached on classifying behaviors. In doing so, the deductive analyses created a classification of transformational behaviors, with the behaviors from the DTLI being the higher order categories.

A number of meaning units were not coded as one of the six behaviors from the DTLI. Thus, inductive processes played a role in the second part of the analysis. Quotes that represented common themes were organised to form an overall picture of the experiences of the participants concerning aspects of effective leadership that did not fit in directly with the transformational leadership framework.

### **Trustworthiness**

Giacobbi, Foore, and Weinburg (2004) suggest that the quality of information gained from qualitative research is reliant on the trust and rapport established between the interviewer and participant. The interviewer used various strategies to gain rapport and buy-in from the participants, in order to encourage them to provide full, in-depth responses about effective

leadership (King & Horrocks, 2010). It was explained to the players the purpose of the study, that the findings would be used for academic publication, as well as being used to inform cricket coaching workshops. In addition, explaining to participants that the researcher was interested in their own experiences, and they were assured there were no right or wrong answers, thus participants were not pressured to discuss what they felt might be the correct response concerning effective leadership in sport. Introductory questions were also used to develop rapport with the participants such as asking them about their playing experiences and the season just completed.

There was various evidence that a good level of rapport had been reached with the participants. They spoke freely about their perceptions of effective leadership and each provided a wide variety of examples concerning the behaviors of their captain and head coach. It had been explained to participants that their answers would be confidential in that the name of the participant or the names of any other players or leaders would not be mentioned in any literature. Each participant mentioned players and leaders by name, and it was a sign of the rapport developed that they trusted the researcher not to disclose any such confidential information. As specific example of rapport was a player who was interviewed for 40 minutes before he had to leave do a fitness session. The player said he would come back and complete the interview if he could, and it was evidence of rapport built up that this player returned after the session and spoke for a further 45 minutes. Participant member checks were also used, with interview transcripts sent to each participant to ask them to review the transcript for clarity and accuracy and to make any necessary changes. However, no suggested changes were offered.

## Results

The results are initially organised into six sections (relating to the six transformational behaviors from the DTLI; *high performance expectations, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, appropriate role modelling, intellectual stimulation, fostering acceptance of group*

goals). Following this, themes not relating to transformational leadership, but deemed by participants important with regards to effective leadership, are presented.

### High Performance Expectations

**Coach.** High performance expectations refers to the leader's demands for excellence and high levels of performance from followers (Callow et al., 2009). Every player interviewed provided examples of their coach exhibiting this behavior. These included how the coaches expected players to continually work on improving their skills, provided feedback on areas for improvement even after successful competitive performance, and required players to maintain exemplary levels of behavior and conduct relating to non-performance issues (e.g., being clean shaven for competitive matches). The most common example of high performance expectations was the coach demanding a consistently high level of effort in training, with one player offering a clear example to explain how their coach communicated this;

The one thing he always says is "if you were playing tomorrow in a Test match what would you do today" and it's amazing . . . Sometimes [during practice] you go through the motions, and he says "if you're playing for England tomorrow at Lord's what would you do? You wouldn't be going through the motions in your practice, would you?"

Another player illustrated how their coach doesn't accept low standards in training, describing how "Everything you do is for a purpose . . . His phrase is "garbage yardage" so you don't just run in and bowl for no apparent reason." The participants also discussed how the coaches want players to strive for continual improvement. For example, one participant stated how their coach implemented this standard by never being satisfied with the level of performance:

[The coach will] never say you've cracked, well done, you don't need to practice that anymore. Like playing against spin, if he thinks you've cracked the sweep then he'll move

that on another level so it's difficult. You practice all the time but you're improving yourself. He'll never be happy with the way anybody's playing.

These high expectations were expected from all players regardless of their experience. For instance, one participant commented on how the coach was able to get senior players to put in the same effort as those starting out in their careers:

[The coach] was brilliant because I remember the first session he did. We were doing catching practice, and I'm not saying the senior players wouldn't do it properly, and then [the coach] would be having [a senior player] diving on the mats. It's like a 35 year old player who's played for 20 years and you think, well, if he's getting [the senior player] diving around and people like that. . . . He wants everyone, be it the oldest player in the team or the youngest, to really show what they can do.

Interestingly, the participants mentioned how this culture of high expectations implemented by the coach was accepted and embodied by the group moving forward: "We set our own standards as a group and police ourselves as a group quite well." In addition, another participant provided an example of the group taking ownership of their standards, stating, "I think if I turned up, say, for a session hung over some of the senior lads or even some of my peers would say, listen, what do you think you're doing?"

There was one example of a potential negative effect of the coach having levels of expectation that are considered too high by the players. For example, one participant stated, "[The coach] backs his players and he believes in his players he can get quite emotional at times because he wants us to be successful which is a great thing to have, and it shows how much he cares and how much he's desperate for us to be successful. But I think at times I feel like he maybe expects a little bit too much. He expects you almost to be a machine at times."

**Captain.** There were fewer examples of the captains exhibiting high performance expectations. One participant explained how a new captain had come in and highlighted his



expectations for the players, demanding that “they give 100% for [the side]. If [the side] wasn’t your number one priority then he didn’t want you in the side really which I think is quite fair.”

Another participant illustrated a specific instance when their captain insisted the players maintained a high level of performance and concentration when a game was drifting to a draw:

It was the last day of the game and . . . I think we’d had a laugh and we’d let a couple of miss-fields go, and we couldn’t lose the game, we couldn’t win it, so it just petered out to a draw. We had a bit of a laugh and [the captain] said “I don’t care where the game is going; we need to keep these high standards because there might be a game next week where those two runs could cost us the game.”

The participants also highlighted how their captains expected consistent high-levels of performance from their teams. For instance, one participant explained how their captain forcefully outlined his expectation for their performance following two contrasting and inconsistent results:

We played a 20-20 game against a good team in front of 15,000 and we won. We played really well and we all went up and had a few beers that night. We travelled the next day to [another team] for another 20-20 and we got absolutely thrashed and he got stuck into us saying “you think you’re superstars now . . . you’ve won one game against a decent team!” He got stuck into us and we were all like, yes, it’s pretty fair really.

### **Appropriate Role-Modelling**

**Coach.** Appropriate role modelling refers to behaviors of the leader that set an example for followers, which is consistent with the values the leader espouses (Callow et al., 2009). Our data showed two main types of role-modelling, first, the role-modelling of attitudes in the general approach of the leaders, and second, the role-modelling of actions in on-pitch performance which were exhibited by the captain. Only participants from one team described ways their coach exhibited appropriate role-modelling. Participants from this team discussed how their coach

344 embodied the values relating to a professional attitude and desire for personal-growth that he  
345 requested from his players, with one athlete describing:

346       You get that passion from him. A little bit like you would say, as a player, it's easier to  
347       follow a person who's leads by example than it is to follow someone who tells you what to  
348       do, and sits down and doesn't really do anything. You get that with [the coach] who  
349       probably leads his life a little bit along those lines. He's expecting you to be professional  
350       and expecting you to keep looking to improve your own game and be better than the  
351       opposition. You feel like he has that same outlook in himself, it rubs off on you.

352       **Captain.** In contrast to the limited examples of appropriate role-modelling by the coach,  
353       each of the three captains were seen by participants as a strong role-model through their  
354       performances on and off the pitch. In particular, participants discussed how their captains'  
355       approaches to training, general conduct and work ethic had an impact on their own preparation.  
356       This was highlighted by one participant who described how the captain was "the biggest  
357       professional in the squad by far. He's the fittest. I've never seen anyone catch as many balls as a  
358       wicketkeeper." In addition, participants discussed how they looked to the captain to set an  
359       example for the team, especially if the captain expected high levels of effort and commitment  
360       from the rest of the squad. For instance, one participant discussed how their captain's approach to  
361       preparation and competition had an inspirational impact on them:

362       For me personally as well he's been a role model growing up playing cricket. He is one of  
363       the best county bowlers on the circuit and if I could have a career like him I'd be very  
364       happy . . . he's still actually working on all things, working hard. He still is that model  
365       professional. So that inspires you to think, well, he works that hard and you can see why  
366       he performs out in the middle.

367       Participants acknowledged that other players (e.g., senior or overseas players) could have  
368       an influence or be perceived as role models. However, while other players were proposed to be

role-models, participants proposed that, given their influential role in the team, the approach and behavior of the captain had the most influence on the team. For example, one participant articulated his opinion concerning why the captain has a greater influence by saying “I think that as a captain, if you’re able to be positively influencing [the team] you multiply what another person in the side would do by being captain.”

### **Inspirational motivation**

**Coach.** The participants were asked to recount examples where their leaders developed, articulated, and inspired them with their vision for the future (Callow et al., 2009). Compared to other behaviors, the participants offered relatively fewer examples of the captain or coach articulating an inspiring vision. In the main participants struggled to recall instances where they were inspired by the coach. However, one example a participant offered was when the coach outlined the need for supreme levels of fitness at the start of the season:

He makes you believe that you're better than everybody you're going to play against, and if you do things in the right way the rewards are there for you. So he makes you believe that you're not just running on the treadmill for 20 minutes busting a gut because someone else is doing it. He reminds you that you're doing it because in August when everyone else is knackered you'll feel fine when you wake up, that sort of thing.

Interestingly, while not being able to recall instances where they were inspired by the coach the participants suggested that this may be a more implicit process. For example, with regards to the coach being an inspirational figure, one participant stated: “If you said give me 10 words to explain [the coach] probably none of them would be inspirational but, at the same time, he must be doing something along those lines in his own way of being inspirational.” In addition the participants discussed the importance of the coach’s communication and the subsequent impact that this had. For example, one participant described how, though they did not explicitly

393 perceive the coach to be inspirational, the way the coach communicates in an honest manner with  
394 the team was impactful:

395 [The coach] is a realist, you know that he's not bullshitting, and he says it as it is and you  
396 believe every word he says . . . that's what excites me about it! When he says something  
397 it's realistic. It's quite hard to put because he's not inspirational but at the same time he's  
398 not not inspirational.

399 **Captain.** Examples of captains showing inspirational motivation came from participants of  
400 only one team. In this instance, participants spoke of the way the captain articulated an inspiring  
401 vision at the start of his first season in the role, which followed a season in which the team had  
402 underperformed, with one participant saying: "He made a speech to the team and said "I want us  
403 to be the best trainers"; It was all how we are going to do it [be successful] and if we do that we'll  
404 do well." When recalling the same speech another participant from that team commented on how  
405 the captain discussed his vision for the style and freedom with which he wanted the team to play:

406 [The captain talked about] the brand of cricket we were going to play. "We're going to be  
407 attacking, we're going to back each other, we've got no fear of failure! If you want to go  
408 and play reverse with your first ball do it, I'm not bothered, as long as you've got good  
409 reasons to." As a new captain he's pretty attacking and a positive person and he just said,  
410 "Listen, we know how good we are, we know how much talent we've got in this squad,  
411 let's just prove people wrong. We're going in as underdogs, no expectations."

412 When the participant was asked how he said this, the response was that; "He just said it  
413 with confidence and conviction and he said, right, this is what I want."

414 Participants also recalled how this same captain communicated in a way aimed at inspiring  
415 the players throughout the season whilst reiterating the message provided in his opening speech.  
416 However, the participants noted that the impact of inspirational communication may decline if  
417 overused. For instance, when discussing the importance of inspirational speeches one participant

418 stated: “I think when it's used right and sparingly it's a massive motivation even if you just think to  
419 yourself, come on, I'm representing [the county] here.”

420 As highlighted earlier, participants struggled to recall instances where they had been  
421 inspired by an inspirational vision or talk from their leaders. In general, participants suggested that  
422 during team-talks captains and coaches often just outlined the plans and spoke about upcoming  
423 competition-related goals. One participant actually described why, in his opinion, there is a lack of  
424 inspirational talk from the leaders;

425 No, there's no chats where [the coach] gets us all in a huddle and we're all cheering and  
426 stuff like that. From what I've seen it's just really state the obvious things like “right, we  
427 know what we've got to do, let's get out there” . . . We play a lot of cricket and I think  
428 there'd be something wrong if . . . there's 15 professional players here and it was the  
429 coach's job to get them up for every day's play.

### 430 **Fostering Acceptance of Group Goals and Teamwork**

431 **Coach.** This behavior refers to how the leader aims to promote cooperation among  
432 followers and getting them to work together toward a common goal (Callow et al., 2009).

433 Participants provided examples of how the coach did this in a structured way. For example, one  
434 participant recalled how the coach involved the squad in the goal-setting process:

435 At the start of every season we'll sit down as a squad and say, look, what do we want to do  
436 this year, how are we going to compete in this championship, this T20, this 40 over? . . .  
437 So we'll have a structured plan of what we're going to.

438 Another example was provided by a participant who described how both the coach and the  
439 captain explained to him as a new player how he would fit into the overall plan and how they (the  
440 coach and the captain) got new players to buy into the team ethos:

441 They wanted a certain type of cricketer to come here, but they also needed the right guy to  
442 fit in with the dressing room. It was the whole package they were looking at and to be told

that they feel that you're somebody that could fit nicely into the dressing room, and at the same time perform your job in a team, obviously it turns your head a little bit and think "that's a club that I want to be involved in." He didn't really have to sell the club as such but he just put across what [our team] were all about and how they play their cricket and I was sold on that, there wasn't an awful lot more to say really.

**Captain.** Participants discussed instances where the captain impacted positively on players cooperating and buying-in to team goals. For example, one of these was provided by participants from one who described side how a new captain had come in and spoken to the team about how they needed to work together to be successful:

As soon as [the captain] became captain he said "right, I want a meeting with all players." So we all got as a group and he set out what he wanted from his squad . . . trying to get us to play with freedom . . . The lads bought into that quite a lot and we played a different brand of cricket. He just said "we're building for the future, we'll back you all. Let's go play an attacking brand of cricket and if we do that we will do well."

### **Individual Consideration**

**Coach.** This behavior refers to the leader focusing on the individual and giving special attention to individual differences and needs (Callow et al., 2009). Primarily, the coaches demonstrated an individual approach to player development by providing technical and tactical advice and support to players. In addition, coaches provided individual esteem-related support to players in a number of ways. The results revealed two principle ways the coaches demonstrated individual consideration: first, an individual approach to the players' training and development; and second, a more general approach to dealing with the players in an individual way. There were many examples of how the coach dealt with the technical development of players in the training environment. Participants described instances where the coach would actively seek out players for one-to-one meetings to try and find solutions to performance problems or to provide specific

tactical advice. For example, one participant described the effect of his coach's advice about how to overcome a problem related to bowling in a specific match situation:

[The coach] took me to one side and said "if you're going to keep bowling in the power-plays and you're bowling how you do [at the moment] then you will get smashed." He gave me a few ideas of slower balls and bowling wide yorkers, and [in the next match] I bowled in the power play and I bowled better than anybody . . . it just clicked.

As well as providing technical and tactical advice, coaches also demonstrated an individual approach by discussing with players the specific roles that they played within the team. This was highlighted by one participant when discussing an appraisal with the coach:

A question in the appraisal is do you know your role in the team or what do you think your role in the team is and what they [the coach] think your role in the team is. So, I think we are pretty clear as players what our roles in the team are in all forms of cricket.

Participants also provided examples of how the coach provided individual support aimed at increasing their levels of confidence. For example, one participant described how the coach demonstrated belief in him following poor-performance: "I spoke to [the coach] a few weeks back and he said you've had quite a frustrating season but I've got full belief you can still do the job that we signed you to do." Another participant recalled how his coach responded after the player had made a crucial mistake during a game: "I went home that night and [the coach] texted me, saying, "don't worry about it, we all drop catches, the most important thing is tomorrow and the job you're going to do for the team." The participants discussed how this individual approach was informed by the coaches' understanding of the players within the squad and their different needs and requirements, with one participant stating that the coach is "quite in tune with how people are and what people like to do and don't like to do and how they like to work." Another participant highlighted the importance of this individual approach suggesting that a blanket approach to coaching would not work for everyone:

We've got a mixture of people in our side and I don't think you could do one specific thing that would get everybody up for a game. I think [the coaches] realise that different people like different things, and to have one universal way of doing things is very narrow-minded.

**Captain.** Only participants from one team gave examples of their captain showing individual consideration. There were no examples of the captain meeting the specific training and development needs of the players; which is not surprising as the coach has primary responsibility for this area. Primarily, the captain demonstrated individual consideration by understanding the players in the team and thus, having a greater appreciation of how they need to be treated. For instance, one participant stated:

He [the captain] understands players, he understands what people need and he reacts to different situations. I think it's important that he understands how to deal with certain people, whereas before everyone's been treated the same [the captain] has gone to individuals and checked them how they need to be.

The captains' understanding of their players allowed them to act according to the needs of each individual player. Participants provided examples of how this captain dealt with difficult players: "[One player] needs the love, he needs affection and telling him how good he is all the time just to get him through. [The captain] saw that quite early and he's got the best out of them by doing that." Another participant recalled how the captain had taken account of the player's individual needs during a difficult time in the previous season:

I had a very tough workload and what I thought was nice was that [the captain] was quite sensitive to that at times, and when he knew I was tired and I couldn't give 100% he didn't have a go at me. He understood why I was in that position because of what I'd done, whereas some of the other lads he'd encourage them to train harder and go in the gym.

#### **Intellectual stimulation**



**Coach.** This refers to leader behaviors that challenge followers to re-examine and rethink some of their assumptions, and provides followers with opportunities to solve problems on their own (Callow et al., 2009). In the present study, participants provided various examples of how the coaches created an environment in which players were empowered to take “responsibility for their own careers.” One participant provided a specific example of how the coach encouraged them to take ownership of their own pre-match preparation:

At the end of the day it's our career, it's not up to him if we perform it's up to us in what we do. For instance, in the T20, on the morning of the game it'll be optional practice so that's up to the individual then whether they want to take that up but he'll be there at 10 o'clock to 12.00 or whatever time it is . . . He's on hand if you want any help.

As well as allowing the players to take charge of their own preparation, coaches also challenged players to think for themselves when trying to overcome a slump in performance. For example, following a run of poor performances, one participant recalled the coach addressing the team:

[The coach] said “What are we doing well and what aren't we doing well? And what are we going to do between now and two days later when we've got to go out again and take on the opposition and rectify this? We can't let it carry on.” So it is a case of letting the team work out what they feel are issues that are hindering their performance and then dealing with it.

**Captain.** Whereas the role of the coaches in providing intellectual stimulation appeared to centre on player preparation and development, the captains' displays of this behavior were mainly during match scenarios. For example, one participant discussed how his captain allowed the bowlers autonomy on the field of play:

He [the captain] allows the team to take itself where it wants to go. So, particularly with the bowlers, he allows a lot of autonomy. He says “if you're playing first team cricket

you should know how to set your own field, you should know how to bowl a ball where you want to bowl it.”

The captains also challenged players to contribute ideas with regards to plans for the opposition and field settings. For instance, one participant stated: “any suggestions on field he'll [the captain] take, he's quite open to that and he expects us to do that because he thinks it makes us better players thinking about it as well.”

#### **Factors that influence leadership effectiveness**

Outside of the six transformational behaviors, a range of other leadership behaviors and characteristics were identified by the participants as having an impact on their perceptions of their coaches and captains. These were coalesced into three categories which related to leader characteristics, appropriate boundaries, and quality of leader communication.

**Leader Characteristics.** Participants in the present study highlighted a range of positive characteristics (e.g., knowledge of the game, enthusiasm, organization). In the current study, social characteristics emerged as the most frequently cited elements which impacted on participants' perceptions of leadership effectiveness. For example, both coaches and captains were described as being approachable and, consequently, players described how they were happy to seek-out their leader when they needed cricket specific and personal advice or support, with one player describing how their coach was, “somebody that’s very, very approachable . . . whether you need something from a cricket point of view or you need something from a personal point of view”. Another positive consequence of the leader being approachable was that players felt: “a lot more relaxed knowing that [the captain] is approachable”. Honesty was also found to be a key characteristic, particularly amongst the coaches. Participants discussed the benefits of leader honesty, suggesting that it allowed players to understand their roles, know where they stand and help create trust between the leader and the players. For example, one participant stated: “I think

566 the best thing about (the coach) is he's very honest . . . He'll tell you straight, and you always  
567 know where you stand which is pretty good as a coach."

568 When discussing the importance of honesty, one player recalled his initial meeting with his  
569 coach when signing for the club:

570 I had some quite open and honest discussions with (the coach) about where I was as a  
571 cricketer, where I wanted to go. He was quite upfront and honest which sometimes you  
572 don't always get in contract negotiations . . . I found that very endearing and him  
573 representing the club . . . I was really taken by that and the things he said to me.

574 **Appropriate boundaries.** An interesting social characteristic was the ability of the leader  
575 to establish appropriate boundaries from the players. Primarily participants discussed how their  
576 leaders were able to maintain the right balance between being friendly and socialising with the  
577 players whilst still maintaining an air of authority. For example, one participant commented:

578 I think he [the coach] knows and the lads know when there's time to switch off from  
579 cricket and have a laugh, maybe have a beer or whatever. But when it's time to get down to  
580 business in cricket everyone listens to what he's got to say.

581 Another participant commented on how the captain had been a friend of his previously and, now  
582 had come into the team, had the ability to separate having a joke and being serious:

583 Yes, well I've played with him since under-10s and I was usher at his wedding. I didn't  
584 realise how it was going to go because obviously selecting a team and things like that.  
585 When he's at work, he's at work but after he'll still have a beer and he's still one of the lads  
586 so he does separate the roles [being a captain and a friend] quite well.

587 **Quality of Communication.** Linked in with the interpersonal skills of the leader, the  
588 quality of leader communication was another commonly cited effective leadership quality. In  
589 general, participants discussed how the leaders' communicated in a concise way and clearly  
590 outlined what they wanted from players in both practice and competitive contexts. For example,

one participant spoke of how he appreciated the coach and captain speaking in a precise manner to outline their plan for the season: “I'm not saying me and [the captain] and [the coach] sat down and had a meeting for 20 minutes, it might be 2 two minute conversations but after those two minutes I know what I'm doing for the rest of the season.” Similarly, a participant from a different team reinforced the preference for clear and to the point communication in order to understand what is required from the team:

When people stand up and say something it's relevant, it's to the point and it's taken on board and you go away and get on with it. You don't need to sit there for 20 minutes, half an hour, pulling things to pieces. [The coach] says something, you listen, 99 times out of 100 it's to the point and it's exactly right, what we all knew and you get on with it and the same with [the captain] I find.

### Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to further the existing body of transformational leadership literature by investigating and illustrating transformational leadership behaviors of captains and coaches in an elite sporting environment. Building on the findings from the Hodge et al. (2014) study this is the first study to specifically examine transformational leadership in an elite professional sport environment. These findings add to our existing understanding of effective leadership in sport by highlighting *how* and *what* formal leaders do in elite sport to exhibit transformational leadership and, thus, offer applied suggestions for individuals working in this area. Importantly, the findings also provide suggestions regarding how formal leaders operate within leadership hierarchies (for instance, in elite sport where there are often head-coaches supported by specialist coaches, the captain, and senior players). Indeed, the results suggest that captains and coaches play different, but complimentary roles with regards to the leadership behaviors they display. For instance, within the present study, coaches mainly appeared to be responsible for setting the high expectations, with the captains reinforcing this by being a role-

model for the players to follow both on and off the pitch. In addition, coaches appeared to show an ability to understand the individuals within the team and offer support (e.g., reassuring individuals following poor performance) in the appropriate manner when required. One potential reason for this is the dual leadership-player role which makes it difficult for captains to dedicate time to their own practice and development, as well as catering to the needs of the individuals within the team. With regards to individual consideration, coaches and captains appeared to demonstrate this in different scenarios, with coaches showing individual consideration in training and captains during matches. In addition, other factors, such as the quality of communication of the leaders, their interpersonal skills, and the ability to keep appropriate social distance were identified as being important to the participants' perceptions of their leaders' effectiveness.

A key skill of transformational leaders is to be able to articulate a compelling vision for the future which enthuses and unites followers towards a common goal; the creation of a vision is encapsulated within the behavior of inspirational motivation (Bass, 1985). Arthur, Hardy and Woodman (2012) suggested that inspirational motivation and fostering acceptance of group goals predict vision. Interestingly, within the present study participants struggled to recall instances where they were explicitly inspired by their leaders. Indeed, only one group of participants made mention of an inspiring speech given by a new captain, who had come in following a poor season for the club, about the way in which he envisaged the team playing. This finding provides support for previous research which suggests that charismatic leadership<sup>2</sup> tends to arise in times of crisis (Downton, 1973) and, thus, suggests that a leader may be able to rouse players with an inspiring vision for the future (i.e., exhibit inspirational motivation) following difficult times or if they are new to the club.

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<sup>2</sup> While we appreciate readers may be confused by the use of the term charismatic leadership here, research has often used the terms charismatic leadership and transformational leadership interchangeably, and the two constructs have been shown to share many similar characteristics (van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013).

These findings concerning inspiration suggested that while the participants could not consciously recall being inspired by their leaders, this did not necessarily mean the leaders were not inspirational. Indeed, in the quantitative data, players rated their coaches highly on the inspirational motivation subscale of the DTLI. This supports the findings and suggestion from previous research that the way in which transformational leaders are proposed to inspire followers (i.e., with a compelling vision for the future) may not fully capture the mechanisms through which players are inspired by leaders in sport (Figgins, Smith, Sellars, Greenlees, & Knight, 2016). Thus, it might not just be that classic speeches or highly charismatic leaders instil inspiration, but rather it is in the daily interactions that leaders have where trust and loyalty are built up over time that might enable coaches to have inspirational effects. Research has demonstrated that exposing individuals to role-models may inspire them to greater heights (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997). For instance, by demonstrating exemplary behaviors such as effort in training, and thus, exhibiting the transformational behavior of appropriate role-modeling, captains may inspire their teammates. Indeed, research has proposed inspiration is a powerful motivational state which can lead to a range of positive outcomes including increased self-determination and intrinsic motivation (Thrash & Elliot, 2003), greater goal attainment and persistence (Milyavskaya, Ianakieva, Foxen-Craft, Colantuoni, & Koestner, 2012), and improved productivity (Thrash, Elliot, Maruskin, & Cassidy, 2010). Further research might examine players' experiences of being inspired by leaders to add to our understanding of leadership in sport.

With regards to the vision element of transformational leadership, the majority of leaders did not explicitly outline a vision is perhaps a product of the time in which the leaders discussed had been in their role. It appears that the need to outline a long-term vision may not be required as a limited number of new players are brought into the group at any one time. Rather it appears that this is more of an implicit process and that *maintenance* of a previously outlined vision is required by demonstrating high performance expectations and appropriate role-modelling. In the present

study, participants outlined how their captains and coaches created high-performance cultures, maintaining the vision in practice through coaches demonstrating exemplary time-keeping and standards of appearance, and captains' role-modelling effort expended in training and preparation. Therefore, from an applied perspective, it appears the coach should pick a captain who will embody behaviors that best align with the vision for the team (e.g., if the coach wants the team to be calm under pressure it is important that the captain is someone who has/does demonstrate the ability to control his emotions in testing circumstances). Such a suggestion would be supported by existing leadership theories (e.g., social identity theory; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which suggest that leaders who are highly prototypical (represent the values and ideals of the group) are more likely to be able to influence and advance their team (Slater, Coffee, Barker, & Evans, 2014).

Another interesting finding from an applied perspective relates to high-performance expectations. In the present study, leaders appeared to promote high expectations in order to challenge players, with the findings revealing numerous ways that the leaders demonstrate these high expectations. Interestingly, Jones (2002) suggests that while leaders in high level sport understand the need for vision and challenge, leaders often fail to adequately support players. Indeed, in educational psychology, Daloz (1986) proposed that if you have high levels of challenge, then high levels of support are also required. Thus, high challenge with low support could lead to followers feeling overwhelmed by demands, which in turn might potentially lead to burnout and withdrawal from sport (Arthur et al., 2012). Our findings suggest that the leaders coupled challenging their players to perform at a high level (e.g., by encouraging ownership over development) with emotional and performance-related support. This particularly occurred through the individual consideration they demonstrated, which created an effective environment in which their teams could develop and meet agreed performance targets. These findings provide some support for the applied vision, support, and challenge conceptualization of transformational leadership (Hardy et al., 2010; Arthur et al., 2012). In addition, our findings appear to support

those of Hodge et al. (2014) who found that in order for a team to achieve the vision, leaders must provide the necessary support (e.g., emotional support or technical guidance) and challenge (e.g., setting high expectations and encouraging ownership of development) at the elite level of Rugby Union. However, interactions between transformational behaviors, and the impacts such interactions would have on followers, has received no attention in the sport psychology literature, and this could provide a fruitful avenue for future research.

Participants also identified a range of other behaviors, characteristics and factors that appeared to impact upon their perceptions of their leaders. For instance, players proposed that the leaders were able to understand when and where the boundaries lay between socializing with players while still being able to maintain authority. This appears to be closely aligned with the concept of social distance, which refers to the hierarchical distance between leaders and followers (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). This concept has received attention in the organizational literature, with Cole, Bruch, and Shamir (2009) finding that social distance between leaders and followers moderated the relationship between the transformational behaviors of the leaders and individual level outcome of followers. Specifically, Cole et al. found that when followers reported a socially close transformational leader, this resulted in more positive follower outcomes. Nevertheless, the work of Cole et al. has yet to be investigated in a sport setting, and considering social distance as a contextual moderator would be a worthwhile avenue for future research in sport (for a review of leader distance in sport see Arthur, Wagstaff & Hardy; in press).

Participants also discussed the importance of the way in which their leaders' communicated, which supports previous research that has highlighted the importance of the leaders' communication. For example, Haselwood, Joyner, Burke, and Geyerman (2005) found that highly rated coaches gave messages in a clear, understandable manner, and had a good command of the language. In addition, the quality and brevity of leader communication highlighted by participants in the current study, supports the findings of Gallimore and Tharp



(2004) who examined John Wooden's coaching behaviors, and found how proficient communication is coveted among coaches to assist in the relaying of information. Gallimore and Tharp summarised how Wooden's "teaching utterances" during practice were "*short, punctuated, and numerous. There were no lectures, no extended harangues*" (p.120). The importance of a leader communicating in an effective manner appears to be crucial, and it is plausible to suggest that a leader's quality of communication might be a mechanism through which a leader can act in a transformational way. For instance, it could be that the quality of communication would mediate the relationship between inspirational motivation and the extent to which followers are motivated to achieve the vision. However, at present this contention is tentative and needs further investigation. Based upon the findings of the present study leaders should be encouraged to communicate their points in a concise and understandable manner, with the emphasis clearly being on quality rather than quantity.

A strength of the current study was that it was guided and underpinned by transformational leadership theory, a theoretical model of leadership widely used in the literature. This meant examples were provided concerning how leaders exhibit specific transformational behaviors, and thus provides an insight for leaders and sport psychologists who work with leaders in elite sporting environments. In addition, specific captains and coaches who were perceived as being high in transformational leadership behaviors were identified through the use of a validated measure of transformational leadership in sport (DTLI; Callow et al., 2009). Indeed, future studies might look at players' perceptions of leaders who are not considered as transformational, and examine how followers perceive such leaders might behave in order to improve their leadership. The present study relied on retrospective interviews conducted in the offseason which might have impacted on recalling examples of leader behavior. However, while interviews during a season could be influenced by aspects such as current results, future research might use more longitudinal designs with interviews at multiple timepoints to stimulate a more comprehensive recall of

effective leadership behaviors. Alternatively, future research might use observational methods (e.g., field observations) to track and record the use of transformational behaviors, players might use diaries to record examples, or the researcher might immerse themselves in a team culture to uncover the behaviors exhibited by the transformational leaders. In addition, leaders in the present study had been in their positions for varying lengths of time. Thus, future research might examine the different behaviors exhibited by leaders at different stages, and explore issues such as what are the most important leader behaviors when a leader starts in this leadership role, or what are the important leader behaviors to maintain and strengthen the culture within the side over a longer time period.

In the present study, we only considered the leadership behaviors of the coach and the captain. However, recent research by Fransen, Vanbeselaere, De Cuyper, Vande Broek, and Boen (2014) has identified that other members of the team provide leadership besides the formal leaders. Therefore, future research might also consider the transformational behaviors of a range of leaders, beyond the formal leadership roles of the captain and coach. In addition, deductive processes were used in the first stage of the analysis, to code participant responses into specific categories of the DTLI. While this approach allowed the results section have an emphasis on illustrating examples of transformational behaviors, the use of an inductive approach at the outset of the analysis might have provided a broader overview of the effective leadership behaviors of the elite captains and coaches. Furthermore, the use of the DTLI was a strength to the study as it more fully differentiates transformational behaviors and has been validated within a sporting sample (Callow et al., 2009). However, this is only one model of leadership, and the examination of other models might further our understanding of effective leadership in sport (e.g., servant leadership, sacrificial leadership)

### **Applied Implications and Summary**

In summary, little qualitative research in the sport psychology literature has explicitly examined transformational leadership behaviors in sport, and in an elite environment (cf. Arthur & Tomsett, 2015). In the present study, a range of examples of transformational behaviors exhibited by head coaches and captains in professional cricket were identified, as well as other pertinent aspects of effective leadership were identified. It is hoped that this information will benefit coaches and captains at all levels by providing them with a range of perspectives on how to exhibit effective leadership behaviors. The findings of our study offer a number of applied implications to leaders and applied practitioners working with leaders. The data illustrates a number of ways that leaders might challenge followers, but leaders also need to consider the levels of support they provide followers to meet these challenges. Our findings also highlight how players appreciate their leaders communicating in a clear, concise manner. In addition, there appears little need to develop leaders' ability to deliver inspiring, arousing speeches. Instead, leaders might focus on regular interactions with followers to inspire them, including modelling exemplary behaviors, and building trust and loyalty. Finally, previous research findings have been used to inform interventions to help leaders become more transformational (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, Bass, & Shamir, 2002; Hardy et al., 2010), thus, it is hoped that the rich qualitative data concerning effective transformational behaviors emerging in the present study will help inform sport psychologists working with leaders in sport, as well as inform leadership training programmes focussed on developing effective sporting leaders.

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- 924 Table 1.

925 *Average overall perceptions of the transformational leadership of county cricket coaches and*  
 926 *captains (\* no players from county 7 rated the captain as that captain had only just taken the*  
 927 *post).*

| Team | Head coach ratings |                |                  | Captain Ratings   |                |                   | Selected |
|------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------|
|      | No. of<br>players  | Mean<br>rating | Rank             | No. of<br>players | Mean<br>rating | Rank              |          |
| 1    | 12                 | 3.83           | 10 <sup>th</sup> | 14                | 4.09           | 4 <sup>th</sup> = |          |
| 2    | 13                 | 4.32           | 4 <sup>th</sup>  | 12                | 3.63           | 10 <sup>th</sup>  |          |
| 3    | 14                 | 4.03           | 8 <sup>th</sup>  | 13                | 4.01           | 7 <sup>th</sup>   |          |
| 4    | 8                  | 4.35           | 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | 9                 | 3.91           | 8 <sup>th</sup>   |          |
| 5    | 14                 | 4.47           | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | 14                | 4.06           | 6 <sup>th</sup>   |          |
| 6    | 13                 | 4.80           | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 12                | 4.52           | 1 <sup>st</sup>   | ***      |
| 7    | 19                 | 3.74           | 11 <sup>th</sup> | 0*                | -              |                   |          |
| 8    | 13                 | 4.12           | 6 <sup>th</sup>  | 12                | 4.09           | 4 <sup>th</sup> = | ***      |
| 9    | 13                 | 4.04           | 7 <sup>th</sup>  | 13                | 3.89           | 9 <sup>th</sup>   |          |
| 10   | 15                 | 3.96           | 9 <sup>th</sup>  | 14                | 4.10           | 3 <sup>rd</sup>   |          |
| 11   | 10                 | 4.18           | 5 <sup>th</sup>  | 10                | 4.27           | 2 <sup>nd</sup>   | ***      |

928